

THE STRENUOUS LAD'S LIBRARY

NUMBER

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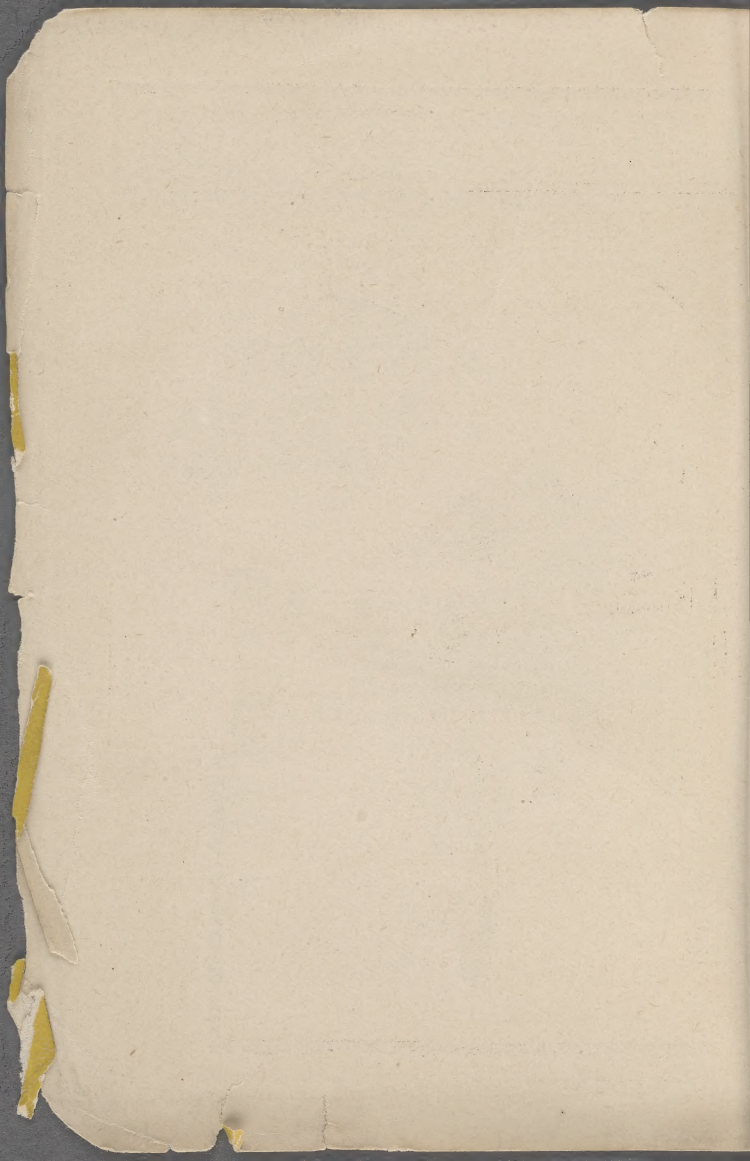
ROLLO JOHNSON

THE BOY
INVENTOR

OR THE DEMON
BICYCLE
— AND ITS —
DARING
RIDER

BY
GEORGE
ADE







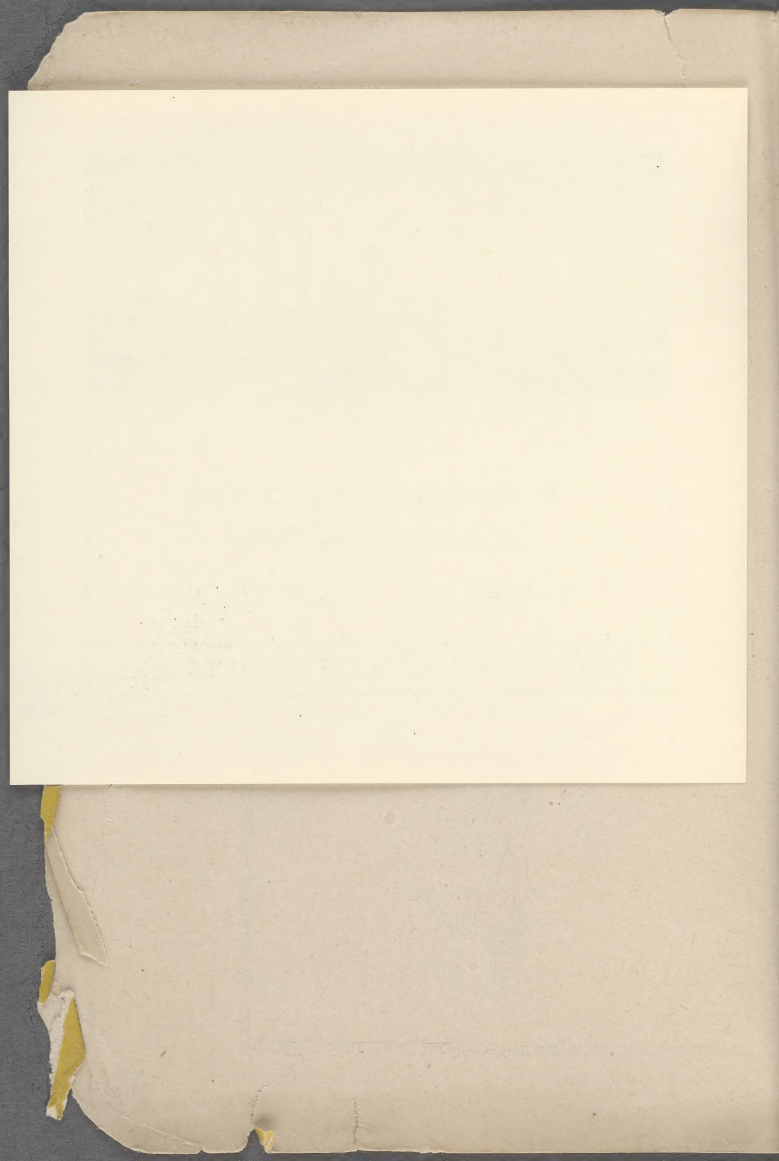
*Presented by Ruth U. Samuel
In Honor of Her Father*

ALBERT ULMANN

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THE SECRET.
“At last!”

Rollo Johnson, arose from



THE STRENUOUS LADS LIBRARY

ROLLO JOHNSON

THE BOY INVENTOR

—: OR: —

The Demon Bicycle and Its Daring Rider

BY GEORGE ADE

AUTHOR OF "EDDIE PARKS, THE NEWSBOY
DETECTIVE," ETC.

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CHAPTER I.

THE SECRET.

"At last!"

Rollo Johnson, arose from

his work as he gave vent to the above.

His friend, Paul Jefferson, who stood by his side, asked: "Are you sure you have succeeded?"

"Yes," replied Rollo, a proud flush coming to his cheek. "With this bicycle I am quite sure I can make the fastest time that has ever been made."

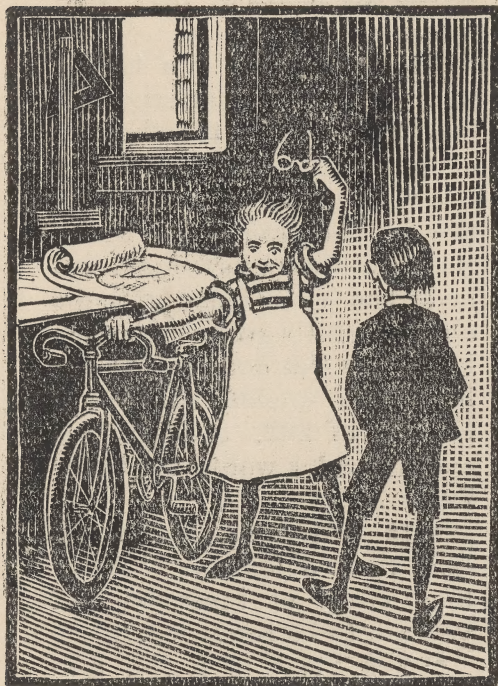
Well might our hero flush, for now at the age of 8 he had accomplished what Edison had failed to do. He had built a bicycle to be operated by electricity!

Standing in his workshop with Paul Jefferson by his side, he explained in a few

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“ AT LAST, ”

words the secret of his invention,

He had filled the tubing with compacted batteries and had joined them together by copper wires, thus utilizing the vacuum. At the point in the ball-bearing axle where the currents conveyed, a flexo-lever had been placed, with the ohms operating directly on the hub. By this contrivance our hero was enabled to use a gearing of 282, as easily as another rider would use 68 or 72.

"It is indeed wonderful," said Paul Jefferson. "After four years of incessant toil you are to be rewarded."

"Yes," replied Rollo, mu-

singly, "Tomorrow I shall win the mile championship on my wheel and then I will be famous."

A grating laugh startled them.

They turned and beheld Hector Legrand, the millionaire and capitalist.

A cold and cruel smile flitted across his face.

"Rollo Johnson, I heard the statement you just made," said he, insultingly. "If you dare put this invention of yours on the market you will ruin me and mine, and I will kill you."

Our hero laughed defiantly.

With a muttered curse Hector Legrand drew a dagger

and sprang at our hero.

As he did so, Rollo stepped quickly backward and touched an electric button connected with galvanic plates under the floor.

With a maniacal shriek Hector Legrand fell to the floor and lay there quivering.



HECTOR LEGRAND FELL.

CHAPTER II.

THE RACE.

Rollo Johnson well knew that his enemies were desperate and accordingly he had taken every precaution

He had imparted the electric shock to Hector Legrand at the critical moment, for the millionaire's dagger was about to be imbedded in our hero's breast.

When Hector Legrand recovered from the shock he left the place, much crestfallen.

Rollo bade Paul Jefferson an affectionate good-night,

and soon after retired, for he wished to be well rested in anticipation of the great race for the championship of America.

Next morning he arose bright and early and proceeded to the race-track, where thousands had already assembled.

It was known that our hero was the inventor of the demon bicycle, and there was a buzz of wonder and admiration as Rollo came upon the track, attired in a neat costume of red, white and blue. To all appearances his wheel was the same as those used by the other riders.

Hooper, the favorite in the

race, approached our hero and said, tauntingly, "You are a mere stripling, and it is presumptuous of you to enter the championship race."

"I will bide my time," said Rollo, for he was a gentleman at heart.

A moment later the riders in the championship race were called to the tape and the word "go" was given.

Eight wheels flashed away in the sunlight.

Hooper was leading, Gardiner was second and Smikels, was third. Our hero was last of all, pursuing an even pace, a smile lighting up his pale and handsome face.

At the quarter-mile he was

ten lengths behind.

At the half he seemed hopelessly beaten.

Suddenly there was a shout.

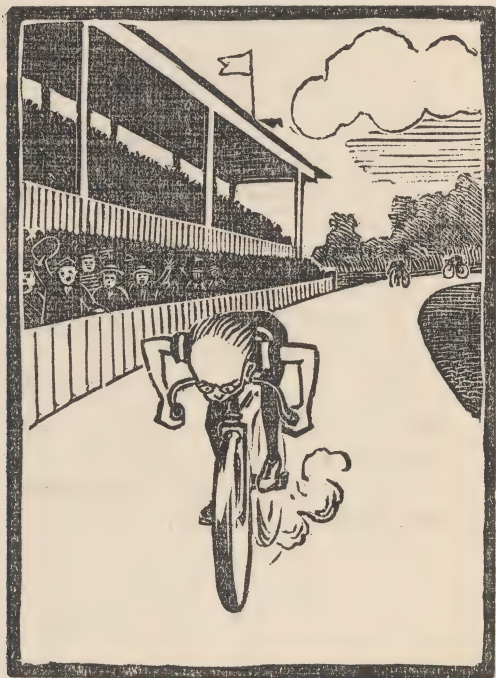
Rollo had touched the button and released the powerful current.

His wheel shot forward like a flash of lightning.

He passed the other riders in a twinkling,

The amphitheatre rang with wild cheers. He had won by twenty lengths!

The last half-mile had been made in 14 seconds!



HIS WHEEL SHOT FORWARD.

CHAPTER III.

THE PLANS.

With a light heart Rollo returned home having won the championship of America.

As he entered the house a sad sight presented itself.

His father and mother and his elder brother Claude were seated in the parlor weeping bitterly.

"Why so sad on this day when all should be joy?" asked our hero.

"Alas!" replied his mother, kissing him affectionately, "some one has stolen the plans."

"Stolen the plans!" he gasped.

"Yes, Rollo; the only copy in existence was left lying on the table in your work-shop, and some miscreant has purloined it."

"If I do not recover those plans my four years of investigation will have been in vain," said Rollo, thoughtfully.

"I will follow the thieves to the world's end!" exclaimed Rollo, and leaping on his demon bicycle, he rode away like the wind!



“WHY SO SAD?”

CHAPTER IV.

THE RIVER.

It was dusk.

In a dingy basement near the murky Chicago river Hector Legrand sat at a table with four swarthy men, heavily armed.

Before them on the table were the plans for Rollo Johnson's demon bicycle. They were conversing in hoarse tones.

"I have the plans." said Hector Legrand, "but my revenge is not yet complete. The boy must be put out of the way."



THE FIVE MEN FELL.

His four companions growled fiercely.

At that instant a volt of ightning shot across the room. There was a blinding flash and the five men fell from their chairs stunned by the shock.

Rollo Johnson had crept down the stairway and turned upon them the full force of his portable automo-battery.

As the villains struggled to their feet they saw our hero disappearing up the stairway. He had captured the plans.

With shrieks and curses they drew their weapons and pursued him.

Rollo mounted his wheel and dashed southward.

A dozen bullets whizzed by him.

He looked ahead.

The street along which he was flying led to the open river!

There was no escape to right or left!

Behind him were the murderous pursuers!

Ahead of him yawned the dark stream!

What was he to do?

CHAPTER V.

THE ESCAPE.

Hector Legrand and his villainous associates emitted yells of triumph when they saw our hero riding madly toward the open river.

Rollo heard their demoniacal cries and he knew that capture meant certain death.

Pressing the electric button on his wheel he flew forward at a terrific speed.

At the river's brink he lifted his front wheel.

The bicycle shot into the air with the swiftness of an arrow.



BANG! BANG! BANG!

Bang! Bang! Bang! went the
revolvers.

Then there were howls of
rage.

Rollo had landed safely on the
other side.

CHAPTER VII.

RETRIBUTION.

After his escape from the would-be assassins Rolio's first act was to notify the police of Hector Legrand's attempt to steal the plans.

The police went to Hector Legrand's mansion to arrest him, but he had escaped, and was never again seen in Chicago.

His four associates were soon after arrested on another charge and sent to prison for life. Such is the fate of evil doers.

As for Rollo Johnson, he took his plans home and had his mother put them in a safe place.

Little remains to be told.

Our hero received a million dollars for his invention and achieved just fame, but he did not relinquish his study, and every day he may be seen in his workshop inventing some useful article for the betterment of mankind.

THE END.

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